

A Spartans Sacrifice

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Summary: The war is over and the Chief is left alone in a big world. He begins a new life training UNSC forces and seeks to discover if humanity was worth all the sacrifices he's seen. Can he find peace and perhaps even love in this new world or will he succumb to his past. Will his memories haunt him and cause ONI to remove him from the civilian populace for safety?

1. Chapter 1

__**A Spartans Sacrifice**__

* * *

><p>Prologue

__(Set after Halo 4 before the UNSC Infinity returns to Requiem)__

* * *

><p>History is filled with defining moments of men overcoming impossible odds for the good of humanity. At the risk of there own lives heroes do what needs to be done, but is it worth it? Should these great men, called heroes by history, sacrifice so much for humanity? Can we as a civilization earn there respect and make there sacrifices not in vain?<p>

* * *

><p>"Sure you won't reconsider Chief?"<p>

"No."

It had been eight months since the Chief was found by the UNSC Infinity and brought back into service to defeat the Didact. His time after the battle was filled with debriefings and extensive

physiological exams. All to discover what he had found and seen, as well as ensure he had no medical problems.

The Chief now stood at parade rest in the office of his current Commanding Officer. The medical team that performed his physiological exam came to the conclusion that having Captain Lasky as the Chiefs CO would be best. As the Chief showed signs of distrust towards any new faces he came into contact with. Lasky however, had helped the Chief and put his trust in him, so the Chief returned the favor.

Lasky stood up from behind his desk in the Infinity's XO quarters which were his temporary quarters until the formal announcement that he was the Infinity's new CO. The room had little personal touch and consisted of an office and a small bedroom connected to it. Even the XO on a dreadnought had to make do with limited space, like everyone else.

"Well Chief, It's not going to be the same without you." Lasky held out his hand and smiled.

The Chief firmly, but carefully shook his hand and nodded his head.

Once everything had settled down it became clear that the Chief had been robbed of a life. The UNSC in a desperate move to show the media it cared for its savior had offered the Chief a chance to live a relatively normal life on earth.

Of course it was an alien decision to the Chief being given a choice to live without a weapon at all times, but after much careful thought he decided it was probably the best choice. There was no enemy left to fight, only pockets of resistance that the UNSC could easily handle. He was no longer needed to fight the creatures that lurked in the darkness and needed to accept that it was over.

The UNSC offered the Chief a duty station in Quantico, Virginia training various special forces and advising them on alien threats and ways to react. It seemed like a perfect idea for the soldier and they informed him that they would assign him a handler to help him integrate into the normal world.

After signing various things for Captain Lasky to confirm his transition, the Chief returned to his room and began reflecting on the current situation and how to proceed.

He was unsure about everything. Having an opinion in his life was a new concept. His only decisions before concerned how to best eliminate a hostile and what would achieve his objective the fastest. Now it seemed everyone wanted his opinion on the war and if the truce with the Covenant would last. He didn't know how to answer them and found himself wishing Cortana was still here to give him orders.

Nothing would be the same without her in his life. He had no Cortana, no enemy, no armor, no weapon, and no objective. Nothing seemed right and he desperately wanted orders.

After a few moments packing his clothes and various medals into a standard issue UNSC sea bag, he decided this would at the very least

be a chance to see if humanity was indeed worth all the sacrifices he had witnessed.

* * *

><p>This FF is my own opinion on how the Chief would react to a Civvy world and the struggles he would go through. I will NEVER include elites walking around BS'ing with the Chief, an intergalactic party, ect ect. You get the idea, so don't PM about wanting to see the Arbiter and the Chief become "Friends". I'm writing this in a serious manner and how I believe the UNSC would handle the situation.<p>

2. Chapter 2

**"We were supposed to take care of each other..and we did."**

* * *

><p>Advanced Infantry Training
Installation**

Nevada District

Air Wing Delta 27

Docking Platform Bravo 7 Whiskey 19

* * *

><p>The drop ship touched down and the technicians began scrambling around to refuel and offload the large craft. The bay doors slowly opened up revealing an extremely large man carrying a sea bag. Sunlight spilled over the cargo bay and a cool breeze whipped along the landing pad. He stepped down off the ramp and the drop ship shifted as a large amount of weight was removed. The ground crew whispered and shot a few glances his way, but carried on with there task. It was obvious to him that everyone on the landing pad was staring at him and he had no problem hearing the whispers even over the idle engines of the drop ship.<p>

The Chief made his way to a small building with the words _RECEIVING_ over the door. He walked slow and was in no hurry to go inside. He enjoyed feeling the warm sun on his pale skin and feeling the cool breeze against his face. He couldn't remember the last time he had his suit off and was not in a lab or aboard a starship.

The Chief eventually made his way to the building and had to bend down slightly to enter without hitting his head. He quickly surveyed the room he was standing in. Making mental notes subconsciously on exits and items that could be used as weapons. It was a waiting area with a few chairs and a counter nearby. He approached the counter and looked down at a Marine that was filling out some paperwork in a very bored and unenthusiastic attitude.

The Marine without looking up let out a deep sigh of frustration. He was almost finished with the requisition order for a new shipment of coffee and now he would have to stop to process some POG boot. The only Marines that come through this docking point were clerks and

admin. All the grunts were sent to larger spaceports for deployment on different colonies or ships.

"I take it your being deployed here on earth."

"Yes." The Chief was curious why the Marine sounded so upset by his arrival.

Still not looking up the Marine let out another drawn out sigh.

"What unit are you with and name?" The Marine stopped writing on the requisition order and gathered up some new deployment paperwork, still without looking at his new visitor.

"1st UNSC Special Forces division, 1st battalion, 1st Marine regiment. Master Chief Petty Officer John 117." The Chief stated the sentence with his usual calm demeanor and growling voice.

The Marine stopped gathering up the paperwork and stood up at attention popping off a hasty salute, dropping various items on the floor in doing so. "SIR!" The Marine was obviously nervous and didn't know how to treat the Chief.

The Chief raised an eyebrow and dropped his sea bag on the ground. "When did we start saluting enlisted?" He crossed his arms across his broad chest and growled.

"Right! Just uuuhh..Paying respect Sir, I mean Chief." The Marine began setting up paperwork in front of the Chief in an effort to hurry up and end the embarrassment.

Chief was not amused in the least. This Marine had acted out of emotion and made a mistake in doing so. Like any good Chief it was his duty as a Staff Non-Commissioned Officer to make sure that didn't happen. Thankfully for the Marine though, the Chief was in no mood to waste time disciplining a clerk.

After an awkward few minutes of signing new unit paperwork and various copies of station orders. The Chief was told that his handler was in route and would take him from here.

After waiting exactly nine minutes and thirty seven seconds an older white man entered the building. The Chief who had been standing in a corner watching out a window on the wall opposite his position stepped forward.

From what the Chief could discern the man was around 51 years old, 6ft 2 in tall, weighed approximately 203lbs, and judging by the scars and the fact that he was a Gunny probably a career military man.

"Well, you must be the Chief. I'm Gunnery Sergeant Reed. I'll be your handler as well as your training officer. I've been with the Training Companies about 2 years now and be patient with me, this is my first time doing anything like this." The Gunny smiled as he sized the Chief up, obviously impressed at what he saw.

The Gunny held out his hand and the Chief shook it firmly, but like always careful to not break it.

"Come on outside then. I got my truck out front and I'm suppose to show you your new housing." The Gunny lead the Chief out front to a very nice pickup truck. At least the Chief assumed it was nice, he wasn't sure what constituted as nice or not.

"Drop your sea bag in the back and we'll head out." The Gunny yelled so the Chief would hear him over the sound of incoming drop ships. Which was unnecessary given the Chief abilities.

The Gunny got inside and started the truck up. He looked over as the Chief had trouble fitting inside the truck and the passenger side dipped down with the new added weight. The Gunny chuckled to himself, "Damn son, this is the biggest truck Ford makes. Sure glad I didn't take my wifes Prius, your ass would be walking."

The Chief glanced over at Gunny as he finally settled into place, albeit with his head pushing against the roof. "That would be acceptable."

"All be damned! You can talk." Gunny smiled and started driving away from the landing pad heading out of the base.

Neither one spoke until they reached a checkpoint leaving the base. Once the Gunny explained to the Corporal why his associate had no ID and after an awkward moment shaking various MP's hands they continued.

"So Chief...This is going to be interesting. The only reason I got picked to baby sit you is the fact that I have five kids." The Gunny smiled and waited a few seconds for a response.

The Chief sat in the leather chair of the dark gray pickup truck perfectly still. He observed the landscape as they passed by. Now that they were out of the military compound the area was only doted with a few houses and many trees.

It was autumn in Virginia and the entire landscape was covered in a mess of red and brown leaves. The area was quiet breathtaking for anyone who had never been to Virginia, however the Chief didn't know how to tell if something was pretty or not and the beautiful landscape was wasted on blind eyes. He simply made a mental note that trying to move quietly in the leaves would prove difficult if needed.

"I expected a scientist or another therapist." The Chief finally responded.

Gunny breathed in and replied. "Yea I figured they'd stick you with one of those too. Hell, maybe even an entire team of them. You're CO though, that Captain Lasky. He personally interviewed me and a few others. Said he wanted someone he could trust with you. Someone who wouldn't lead you astray or be a bad example. Sounded more like a concerned father then a CO...Trust me I know." The Gunny laughed at the last bit and looked over at the Chief to see if he would give him some kind of emotional response. It was as he figured, nothing showed except a pair of rapidly moving eyes. That observed everything around him and looked extremely tired.

The rest of the trip was relatively quiet, besides the Gunny

informing the Chief on various routines and things that needed to be done with the Training Company. He told the Chief that he had four days to kill before starting with the new batch of Marines going through hostile alien training. Then proceeded to give him pointers on how to act around the Marines in order to maximize his effect on them.

While the Chief had lead Spartans into battle many times, he had never trained a group of Marines and was unsure on how they would handle his _methods_.

After exactly twenty two minutes and forty two seconds they pulled up to a relatively large house surrounded by oak trees. The Gunny pulled into the U-shaped driveway and stopped directly in front of the front door. They both stepped out and keenly surveyed the new area.

It was a beautiful home that sat in the middle of a national forest. The UNSC had worked hard to find an isolated home large enough to accommodate the Chief and then completely remodeled the home. They wanted to ensure he knew they appreciated his effort in the war and would help him with whatever he needed. The large two story house was very spacious and the entire place had been built to accommodate someone much larger then a normal person.

After a brief moment taking in the surroundings the Chief grabbed his sea bag and started heading up the stairs to the front door.

"This is pretty impressive. I mean they really went all out. I've never seen the UNSC actually build something that was meant to be a home." The Gunny followed the Chief up the stairs and unlocked the door as they went inside.

After giving the house key and various other keys to the Chief and explaining there function and how he should not lose them they began wandering around the house.

Chief rapidly made mental notes on exits, defensible positions, and access points around the house. Taking care to avoid getting close to any of the windows.

Gunny called the Chief downstairs and showed him where the pantry was located. Which was fully stocked in preparation for his arrival. The team that remodeled the house also stocked it with familiar items to the Chief. Various MRE's, Nutrient pastes, and different items where in the pantry. Along with some foodstuffs he had never seen before.

The Chief picked up a Twinkie and eyed it suspiciously. The Gunny who had been looking in the fridge and trying to decide on whether or not he should get the Chief beer noticed his curiosity at the strange golden squishy object.

"That's a Twinkie...Can you say Twinkie?" The Gunny laughed obviously amused at the Chiefs concern over the object.

"Eat the damn thing, don't just play with it." The gunny grabbed the Twinkie and unwrapped it before giving it back.

The Chief took a small bite out of the golden Twinkie and raised an eyebrow. He enjoyed this _"Twinkie"_ item. He dropped the rest of the

Twinkie into his mouth and easily swallowed it. Looking back at the Gunny he nodded approvingly.

Gunny let out a brief snort and sighed. "Oh yea...I've gotta get you some hard liquor."

After exploring the rest of the house and eating a few items he deemed acceptable the Gunny showed the Chief the garage. Which contained a modified truck, modified in the sense that someone had ripped out the insides and replaced them to suit a much larger individual.

After a brief test drive the Gunny told the Chief he was going to head home for the evening. After multiple speeches telling the Chief to call if he needed anything at all, the Gunny finally left the Chief to himself in his new home.

Chief watched the dark pickup trucks tail lights fade away in the distance. He still heard the trucks engine even though it was well out of visual range.

The Chief stood in the front driveway of his new home, wearing standard issue UNSC fatigues and a black jacket that he had found in his closet. The UNSC had left nothing out and outfitted the home with everything he would need. Understanding his lack of basic skills and probably ignorance of shopping even furniture and clothing were taken care of.

The Chief slowly began walking around the house. Partially to observe various egress routes and partially to clear his head.

He was unsure on what to do now. He had something that was truly his, a home. A place he could live a normal life in, but...How did he live a normal life. How did he simply forget all the things that had happened. He knew things that could change the world. He knew about events in history that made many religions false and saw things that proved science wrong on many occasions.

Chief let out a deep sigh and leaned against a nearby oak tree, observing his home while doing so.

Cortana, what am I suppose to do now?

He thought to himself while repressing his emotions for his lost friend.

* * *

><p>Let me know if you want more or not. I wrote this wondering if anyone else would share my opinion on what the Chief would do after Halo 4. If I continue it will be a lot of romance eventually. I want to gradually ease into it and keep it all realistic...well...as realistic as you can be in the Halo universe<p>

If anyone wants to help me out and proof read my stuff before I submit it lemme know. I would appreciate the help and the outside opinion on where to go with the story.

Remember lots of romance if I continue. I wrote a couple Mass Effect Tali romances and I'm a sap when it comes to the romance field

lol

3. Chapter 3

"Welcome home, John."

* * *

><p>"My daughter made that." Gunny informed as he saw the Chief was holding a macaroni drawing that was laying in the floor board of his truck.<p>

"Names Ashley, she just turned 6 the other day." Gunny kept talking to fill the silence left by the Chiefs cold stare.

Chief couldn't get over how emotional the drawing made him feel. It was a picture of Gunny with his wife and kids all around him holding hands.

Why couldn't I have this life.

Chief felt a wave of regret and sorrow wash over him, he repressed the emotions of course.

Gunny could tell something was bothering the Chief. He had been staring at the drawing for a full minute and while he had told his daughter how beautiful the drawing was, it was just macaroni.

"Ya know, once you start with the Training Companies and everything settles into place. I'm taking you to a bar, no matter how pissed my wife gets about it and I'm going to find some tall long-legged blonde and you, Chief...Your going to show her Spartan prowess...I may need to give her morphine before hand though..." Gunny whispered the last bit to himself, wondering just how the Chief would act with a woman.

Sensing that staring at the picture was making the Gunny continue to talk in a vain attempt to comfort him. The Chief set the picture down and continued looking at the various stores they passed by as they made their way into town.

"Well, we'll worry about getting you a woman later." He said, trying to change the subject since the Chief had given him no response on his last attempt. "For now you need some basic stuff. As thorough as the team that did your house was, they forgot soap and toothpaste stuff...and salt. Every house has to have salt."

Gunny pulled the truck up into a parking space for a small strip mall.

"Come on Chief, this should be interesting." Gunny mocked as he got out of the truck.

Chief had on a pair of black cargo pants and a gray T-shirt that he found in the dresser of his new home. They were both the largest in the sizes available, but still fit him like a diving suit. He looked rather menacing with a cold stare and numerous scars dotting his flesh. Chief, however didn't know how to fix the aura he had. He never liked to talk a lot, he could do little to hide the scars, and

he had no way to hide his obvious inhuman size.

In the end the Chief didn't care one way or the other. He was too curious about why his handler had brought him here. He had enough provisions to last a few months and going out in public like this was dangerous. Too many crowds, too many unknowns.

The pair walked along the side-walk and Gunny explained to Chief what each store sold and what some items were. Occasionally someone would stop and stare, but for the most part everyone simply eyed him while trying to look casual.

It was a pointless attempt for many. He could tell they were staring and could hear what many said.

It wasn't long before he started to feel agitated and anxiety began to take over. He knew what this feeling was, but also knew how to control it. Usually he could control it at least. Panic is something he never did, but currently he was losing it.

It was like wearing a loud set of headphones with nothing but white noise being screamed at you. The Chief hated it, he knew someone was going to try something. He started to sweat and his breathing increased.

The movement all around him, the TV's blaring music, people staring, he couldn't stand it. Somewhere a child started screaming and a man was yelling. Each second his anxiety built up and he could no longer hear Gunny next to him talk about the surrounding area. Gunny's words fell on deaf ears as the Chief began turning his head back and forth rapidly trying to discern friend from foe.

He desperately wanted his armor on to protect him, he needed a weapon, he needed an escape...He needed Cortana.

Gunny was continuing to enlighten the Chief about how to prepare baked Talapia with lemon pepper seasoning when he noticed the Chief was covered in sweat and his pupils were formed in the shape of a diamond.

"Chief? Hey! Chief?!" Gunny yelled trying to get Chief to look at him.

Gunny grabbed Chief's arm trying to get his attention and didn't realize the mistake he had made until it was too late.

"**"Submit! End her torment and my own!"**"

Chief could hear it, he could feel it on his arm. It had him now, he had to fight back. He saw a Marine when he turned around, but it couldn't be. It was...contaminated, it was one of them. He instantly reacted and grabbed the contaminated creature. He hit the creature's legs with his own and threw it on the ground.

Then he looked up, they were everywhere. He could hear their screams and feel their pain, they moved closer to him and he turned and ran. They were too many, he could feel them touching him. They were right behind him.

"**"Sinner!"**"

He kept running not wanting to stop. He knew if he did it would be the end.

The end...Why was he so afraid of the end. He kept running, but started to wonder why he avoided death. What was left in this hollow world, but shackles. The only one who knew him for his true self was gone. Like everyone else he knew...gone.

"John...I need you."

He could hear her. It felt soothing to hear her voice and the sound calmed him.

He stopped running and looked around, expecting to see her.

He let out a deep sigh of relief as he realized the creatures weren't behind him and he was safe. He looked around and saw that he had run into a forest. He could see the buildings to the west where he had come from and wondered if all that he had seen was real.

Did I really see them here? No...Can't be...

Something moved in his peripheral. He crouched down behind a tree that had fallen over during a recent storm. He cautiously eyed the surrounding area, looking for the source of movement.

He saw the Gunny on the phone trying to follow the Chiefs tracks in the dirt. He was nursing his arm as if it were broken.

"I don't know what happened. One minute I was trying tell him about cooking fish and the next he flipped me over and took off...yea, yea...What's up with his eyes though?"

The Chief sensing something was wrong stood up and proceeded to walk over to Gunny.

Gunny stepped back and eyed the Chief carefully.

>"Hang on, found him. Yea, if I don't call you back in an hour send help...alot." He tried to whisper it, but once again to no avail. The Chief wondered though, help with what?<p>

Gunny hung up the phone and then cradled his wounded arm.

"Chief, Everything ok in there?" Gunny sounded concerned, Whether it was for Chief or himself wasn't clear.

"I'm not sure." Chief growled as he looked back towards the buildings.

"Were there...You didn't see them...did you?" Chief inquired in a defeated tone.

"See what Chief?" Gunny replied curiously.

"Nothing." Chief let out a sigh and looked down at the ground.

"I thought...I thought she came back to me, I could hear her." Chief spoke in a deep somber voice.

Gunny raised an eyebrow. "What are you talking about son?"

Nothings right. Everything is off...I need...I need...

Chief couldn't clear his head. He needed something to balance him out, someone. Someone that knew him and what all he's gone through.

"Is your injury severe?" Chief snapped, trying not to think about what just happened.

Gunny looked down at his arm and back at the Chief.

"It's nothing major. Might be broke, but it's my own damn fault for trying to chase you. I tripped down some stairs and hit my arm."

Gunny of course lied, but he could tell the Chief was having problems and being told that he had attacked a fellow soldier wouldn't have gone very well.

"What the hell were you running out here for anyway?" Gunny demanded.

Chief looked into the forest and replied."I thought I saw someone."

After asking the Chief a few more questions, the Gunny decided it would be best to return the Chief home. He had been through enough for his first day in the real world.

The drive back was quiet and somber. primarily because the Gunny had to focus to drive with his left hand, since he was normally right-handed. However, his right hand was not in any condition to steer.

Gunny decided the only real injury he sustained for the day was his pride. He had broken bones more times then he could remember, but he still felt rather weak in comparison to the soldier next to him. It was just too easy for the Chief to disable him and the Gunny was concerned that he might be getting too old for this type of work.

After reaching the Chiefs home and making sure the Chief was ok, Gunny said his goodbye and went home to his family.

Family...

Chief had changed over into his running attire after eating a light meal and was presently running down the side of an empty road, thinking to himself.

The road was a narrow one lane road, surrounded by heavy oak trees. Like the rest of Virginia the entire area was covered in a thick blanket of red and brown leaves.

What do I do?

It kept coming back into his head like a bad stench.

What do I do?

He tried to focus on running and observing the surroundings for any anomalies, but kept thinking back to what he was supposed to do. It was as if he forgot his objective, his target. He knew he was supposed to have one, he always had an objective.

No objective, no target.

He let out a deep sigh and increased his pace. Frustrated at himself for being so helpless and lost without a clear objective he tried to make himself so tired he couldn't think about it.

It was rather difficult however. He was used to running in a heavy suit of armor and lots of equipment, with little chow in his system. Presently he was well nourished, well hydrated, and well rested. This made becoming tired difficult.

After a few minutes of running at an inhuman speed he noticed a vehicle on the side of the road up ahead.

He slowed his pace down and observed a young woman looking at her vehicle's engine with a blank expression.

He was unsure on what to do. It seemed like stopping and helping would be the appropriate thing to do, but was that really a good idea?

He was getting closer and could smell burning oil and various chemicals. He heard the young woman sniffle and curse something under her breath.

* * *

><p>It was just her luck that precisely in the middle of the only national forest in Virginia that her vehicle would break down. She swore under her breath and checked her cell phone again. Still no bars and she had no idea what was wrong with the engine. She had never worked on vehicles before, looking at an engine was like looking at a human brain. She didn't know what anything did or what was wrong. She let out a deep sigh and turned to lean against the side of her small car.<p>

That's when she noticed him.

An extremely large man was running down the road directly towards her. He appeared to be wearing what should have been loose-fitting green military PT shorts and a matching green PT shirt. Both however, were...extremely tight. Something she immediately took notice of.

She turned back to face her car, putting her back to him. Not knowing what she should do, she thought fast. She chewed her fingernail and started to think of scenarios.

I really need help and he looks like a...capable man.

No! No! You'll be fine. Do yourself a favor and spare yourself the embarrassment. Ignore him and let him run past you.

Oh my God is he behind me...he's behind me and stopped running...

Hi, I'm Sarah...no...Hello I am Sarah...NO!...Just turn around and say, hey can you please help me? How abo-

Before she could continue her inner tirade she noticed him walk up beside her and turned to face him.

"Hi! I'm help. Could you please Sarah me?"

DAMN!

* * *

><p>I dunno if i should continue with this one or not? I'm having to choose btwn my Mass effect FF and my Halo FF. I only have so much time for writing drable anyway lol. Lemme know If anyone thinks this is worth continuing

4. Chapter 4

"Pick me up Chief."

* * *

><p>She mentally face palmed herself at the mistake. Instantly feeling her face become hot and only becoming more flustered at the thought of blushing.<p>

"I mean.." She let out a long drawn out sigh.

"I'm Sarah and...well...I have no idea whats wrong with my car." She calmed down after finally finishing her sentence.

The Chief stepped up to examine the engine more closely.

While examining the engine he made a mental note about her voice.

_Warm, sensual...almost...familiar,even. _

He enjoyed hearing her talk.

He noticed the engine was much smaller than the ones he had studied as a child in training. He had always been accustom to working on heavy war machines and fixing bullet holes or shrapnel damage. This time it was a very small car with an odd-looking engine.

Does this guy even know anything about cars? Jesus, Sarah this guy could be some crazed lunatic. You should probably be running away right now...Well...No he could catch me...WAIT!

Sarah began casually going through her purse on the side of the car. Careful to hide her action from the stranger examining the engine. She found what she was looking for in her purse and slid it into her coat pocket very carefully.

"So do you live around here or what are you doing running through the

National Forest." Sarah asked in a curious voice.

The Chief who had been looking for the cause of malfunction glanced over at the woman beside him. He immediately looked down at her hand in her pocket and noticed the way she stood.

Weapon, small calibre, most likely a small self-defense pistol.

"I live twenty-three miles South, South East." Chief replied in his usual somber voice.

Sarah had an obvious expression of surprise on her face at his unusually deep voice.

After acknowledging the weapon in her pocket the Chief began running scenarios in his head on why she was armed.

This small rather petite young woman weighed approximately 110 lbs, stood 5ft 6in and had long dark red hair that she had currently done into a pony tail. A few freckles dotted her rather tan face and complemented it well. The Chief was never any good at deciding if someone was attractive or not, but he enjoyed looking at this woman for some reason. Her red and pink camouflaged t-shirt was covered up by a small dark blue jacket and her blue jeans...outlined her...hips, rather well.

It took the Chief a second longer than usual to process this new information and decide how to proceed. Usually when a weapon was seen he would act immediately, but he was confused at this young woman and wanted to see what she would do.

"So...You ran twenty-three miles?" The woman asked in a obviously impressed tone.

Chief nodded, then began moving some items in the vehicle's engine compartment. While keeping a careful eye on the nervous woman with a weapon, of course.

Ok he lives around here so he didn't just escape from some prison or something. Calm down and be polite.

Sarah watched the Chief work from behind him, eyeing his...figure similar to the way he eyed hers. She began noticing the scars almost immediately and started biting her fingernail again while her mind wondered about the reason for the various marks.

Oh my God. This guy has to be UNSC. Green outfit, scars, and the military base is really close. Yea, definitely a Marine...maybe even one of those special forces ODST Marines...Never realized they were this...BIG!

She started to let her grip on the item in her pocket loosen as she became more comfortable with her new acquaintance.

"Well thanks for the help. I don't know what I was going to do out here alone in the forest."

God Sarah, could you try to make yourself sound more helpless.

"Anyway, I'm Sarah Hollaway." She smiled and held out her hand in a polite manner.

The Chief like always, shook her hand with extreme care, putting almost no pressure on it.

Sarah was rather awestruck at just how big he was compared to her. His hand engulfed hers and the way he towered over her was just, ridiculous.

Chief went back to toying with her vehicle after shaking her hand and after a few moments of awkward silence and some intense staring on both sides, he deemed the vehicle fixed.

"Try it." Chiefs voice startled Sarah as she daydreamed and she jumped slightly into the air.

"Wha- What?" Sarah responded in a dumb struck tone as if she had just woken up.

Chief nodded in the direction of the vehicle and Sarah mentally face palmed herself again.

She opened the passenger side door and reached across the driver seat to the ignition switch.

Chief, who had been watching her in his peripheral noticed her tight pink shirt raise up a few inches as she stretched across the seat. It revealed a tan midsection and he made a mental note that she was in rather decent shape to have an abdomen like that.

His eyes lingered a second longer then he would have normally let them.

Sarah turned the ignition and the vehicle spun to life, with a very quiet hum.

Sarah smiled and walked back over to the Chief.

"Thank you SO much. I can't tell you how grateful I am." Sarah said in a very enthusiastic voice.

"Vehicle type?" Chief replied.

Sarah raised an eyebrow and looked confused.

"What?"

"What type of vehicle is this?" Chief said again slightly louder.

"OH! It's a safe-A car. You know, it runs of oil and solar power." She said in proud manner.

"That's why it sounds so quiet. It runs really smooth too." She added.

Chief nodded.

"A single plasma burn to this tubing will render the vehicle out of

commission." Chief replied in a very sober and serious voice. Pointing at a piece of plastic wrapped in a coil.

Sarah didn't know what to say. She had never thought about getting shot at with plasma.

"Um, I'll get that fixed as soon as possible then..." Sarah sounded nervous and a little confused.

Chief nodded at her comment and then turned around and started to continue running.

"Wait!" She yelled after him.

Chief stopped and turned around to face her. A slight gust of wind blew leaves in circles around the pair in the road.

She had to think fast when she realized she hadn't thought this far ahead into her sentence.

Chief looked at her puzzled.

"Yes?" He asked in his usual growling tone.

In a curious, but polite voice she asked.

"Do you maybe, want a ride?"

* * *

><p>"John? He had luck, Something none of the others had."**

* * *

><p>After a brief, but awkward moment climbing into her car and realizing there was no way he could sit right in this vehicle, the two started driving.<p>

Chief examined the car's interior and noticed multiple large textbooks. As well as a few paper bags with a large golden M on the front. It seemed that she lived a rapid lifestyle and had little time to organize or clean out her car. Chief was slightly amused as she began moving items for him to sit more comfortably and throwing various things in the back seat to hide them from him.

Sarah hadn't been expecting anyone to ride with her and couldn't remember the last time she cleaned her car out. She felt mortified when the large man in the passenger seat dug a tampon out from under him and laid it down in the backseat.

_ Damn it Sarah! Oh my God!_

She thought to herself rapidly trying to formulate an explanation for her cars current condition, but finding none.

Chief briefly explained to her where he lived and she was thankful for the distraction of driving to keep her mind occupied, on something besides him.

After a few moments of silence driving, Sarah started laughing. She tried desperately to hide her laugh, but that only made it worse. Making her normal innocent and sweet voice sound like a dry cackle.

Chief glanced over at her curiously.

"I'm sorry." She stammered.

"You just don't look like a hybrid kind of guy." She giggled, moving a strand of hair behind her ear.

He glanced at her briefly before looking back towards the road eyeing his surroundings. He made another mental note about her laugh, he enjoyed hearing it. It was a very sensual sounding laugh that gave him a strange warm feeling across his body.

Sarah realizing her companion was not the laughing type, immediately felt embarrassed and her cheeks began to darken again.

"So, you in the UNSC?" She asked trying to change the subject away from her previous mistake.

"Yes."

Was the only reply she received.

She was disappointed and had hoped she could find something he would enjoy talking about.

"Neat." After saying it she felt embarrassed again.

Neat, really Sarah. That's "NEAT" God.

Another face palm.

"I mean that's interesting. What do you do?" She asked in a probing way. She desperately wanted to get him to start talking and find out more about him. This giant of a man intrigued her, in more ways than one.

Chief was unsure about why she was asking about him, but felt obligated to give her an explanation.

Nothing about the Spartan program. Keep it short and simple.

He thought to himself.

"I train Marines on advance infantry techniques and ways to react to hostile alien threats." He replied.

Sarah nodded her head.

That sounds about right, yep.

"Wow! My brother was a Marine. Well, before he was stationed at Reach."

She was in such a hurry to keep a conversation going that she accidentally let too much out and said more than she wanted.

She let out a deep sigh and decided to just stop trying to talk to her new acquaintance.

"What unit was he with."

Sarah looked over at the Chief who continued to stare out the window.

"The last letter I got said he was with 5/6's 41st regiment. The ones stationed on the UNSC _Circumference_." She spoke in a low sad tone.

After a brief period of silence the Chief replied.

"They fought well."

Sarah looked over at him, confused.

"You were at Reach?" She inquired, while adjusting her position in her seat.

Chief nodded.

"Were you with his unit? I thought no one made it home alive?" Sarah sounded confused and obviously curious.

Chief looked over at her.

"No. I was only on board a short time." Chief replied.

Sarah wanted to know more, but doubted this statue of a man would be very forthcoming.

Shortly afterwards they reached his home without much more conversation.

She pulled up into his U-shaped driveway and stopped the car.

"Wow! You must be an officer to have a place like this." She stated.

"Master Chief Petty Officer." He replied in a rehearsed voice. That had stated his rank many times.

"Oh, well that explains a lot." She smiled at him and used the brief moment he was facing away to fix her hair.

Chief opened his door and stepped out of the vehicle and the entire car sprung up a few inches.

It was late and the sun was about to go down. A few rays of sunlight peered through the oak forest onto the driveway that was covered in leaves and a cool breeze swept up the Chiefs face.

He was about to turn to head inside his home when he stopped.

Sarah started to panic.

_He's going to go inside, I need to get his number. Maybe see if he

wants to meet up sometime._

"Hey wait!" She yelled after him through the open passenger side window.

Chief stopped and beant over to see what she wanted.

"I never did get your name?" She sounded almost hurt.

Chief thought about why she sounded that way and determined that it must have been rude for him not to give her his name earlier.

Chief wanting to make up for being rude to this nice, young, and attractive woman...

Smiled at her.

"John."

5. Chapter 5

"I have defied Gods and Demons..."

* * *

><p>The room was bathed in a bright flash of blue light. It sounded like an explosion outside and suddenly the room shook violently. Chief, who had been asleep on the floor stood up and very cautiously looked out the window.<p>

He had trouble sleeping in the soft plush bed. It made more sense to sleep on the floor in a corner anyway. A M67 fragmentation grenade had a kill radius of five meters and if anyone threw one in the room they would aim for the center. Being in a corner kept him far enough away and would give him an extra second to respond.

It was dark outside except for a dim blue light in the front driveway of his home. He couldn't tell what it was from this distance and was suspicious.

He quickly put on his cargo pants that were laying on a nearby dresser. He was in a hurry and decide not to put his shirt or boots on. His calloused feet had little problem traversing the soft dirt.

Chief jogged down the stairs in his home and approached the front door.

He moved quickly and quietly. The Chiefs feet stuck to the wood floor and he noticed it was due to a light coating of sweat over his body. He found it odd that he was cold, but also sweated. He remembered having nightmares earlier in the night and determined that was the cause of his profuse sweating.

The majority of his sleep was plagued with nightmares that kept him up most of the night. Every time his eyes would close it would be the same one. Upon thinking about the dreaded memory a cold shiver went down the Chiefs spine and he had to struggle to suppress it.

****_Perhaps, a part of her remains?_****

He hated that voice...that, thing was gone and he knew it, but still. If monsters really do exist, why would there only be one kind?

He ignored these thoughts and began running scenarios in his head over what the light could be and how he would react. He was unsure about this whole situation. He knew something wasn't right, but he didn't know what else to do except investigate the strange light.

He finally reached the door and grabbed the door knob with his massive hand. He stood there a moment pondering the situation before deciding what to do.

He let out a long drawn out sigh and slowly pushed the door open.

He stood on the threshold of the door and peered into the black night. The wind was blowing leaves all around the area and caused the forest surrounding the home to shake, casting odd shadows on the ground.

Chief stepped off the threshold and slowly walked down the stairs onto the cold pavement of his driveway.

He drew closer to the blue light and struggled to identify the strange anomaly.

With each step that brought him closer the pavement felt colder under his bare feet and his lungs drew in less breath with each attempt.

He had walked all the way to the end of his driveway and stood less than ten meters away from the light. He glanced a quick look behind him to see how far he was from his home, but when he turned back around towards the light...

The light had shifted and was now a standing figure directly in front of him. It was a tall and petite figure of a woman bathed in blue. Cortana...

"Don't make a girl a promise... If you know you can't keep it..."

Chief felt an intense cold and an uneasy weakness in his chest.

"Cortana." Chief said barely above a whisper.

The blue image slowly began walking backwards into the night and he could see it fading away.

"Cortana please, don't leave me." Chief said slightly louder than before. Voice filled with regret and sorrow.

_I need you. _He thought, but couldn't find the words.

"Cortana...I..." His throat felt warm and he couldn't speak. He wished she would stay and wait for him to say how he felt.

It was too no avail though. The blue figure vanished before his eyes and he fell down to one knee holding his head in his hands.

That's when he noticed the ground was wet.

Another explosion boomed all around him and the forest was coated in blue light.

Lighting...it's just...lighting...

It had been raining the entire time, but somehow he had failed to take notice until now.

His massive figure stayed motionless in the driveway. The wind stung his body and wiped leaves and other debris around him, but still he remained motionless. The light from a small lamp above the front door to his home was the only thing illuminating his body, besides the occasional lighting flash. His scars outlined by the dim lit lamp ran a map over his body. Anyone driving by his home now would have mistaken him for a creature rather than a man.

He tried not to think about anything while kneeling on the ground. Any thoughts were of the past and only brought further pain and agony.

If he still knew how he would have cried, but it had been years since he allowed himself any kind of outward emotion. He didn't even know if he was capable of emotions.

Just a machine now...

He stayed on one knee in the cold rain for a unknown time. He didn't think, feel, or even remember what he was doing outside. He simply didn't want to move and the rain storm gave little sympathy.

* * *

><p>"David are you coming to bed?"<p>

"In a minute dear, I've got to finish this last report."

David sat in his favorite chair. It was a heavy plastic desk chair with leather padding, he couldn't remember how long he had owned it, but it had long since been worn out.

The room he was in was his sons former bedroom, before he moved out and went to college. Currently he had claimed it as his study and had even built wooden bookshelves for it that now lined its walls. The smell of fresh pine and wood varnish filled the room and he loved the smell mixed with the rooms dim light. He could spend hours sitting in his study and until recently he never had a reason too. However, he now had numerous reports to write and spent much of his time in the dark room.

David was typing on his computer, but had little success.

Obvious signs of PTSD. However, it is an accelerated stage and mixed with obvious major mental and physical torment has become a deep seeded depression with possible violent outcomes.

He deleted the sentence he had just typed. He fought with himself over how best to handle his current situation.

Before he could continue typing his phone rang. He had to move some papers around on his desk to locate it.

David finally located it underneath a stack of papers labeled.

****ONI Section 3****

He opened the phone up and held it to his ear.

"Hello?"

A deep voice came through the other end.

"Gunnery Sergeant, this is Supervisor Alva. I understand you're having some difficulty with the...project."

David's heart sank.

He dreaded hearing from this sly snake and every time he did it was bad news.

"Sir, there's no major problems. Just...transition difficulty." David tried to sound optimistic, but knew the Supervisor could see through him.

"Is that so? Well then I guess I shouldn't need to worry about it killing you and getting loose then?"

David stood up from his desk and walked over to a window in his study. He readjusted his broken arm in its sling and shifted uncomfortably.

"No sir. I've got it under control. If he gets to that point I'll let your men know and will take it from there."

"Good, you understand how much faith I'm putting in you though? The UNSC begged us to let "it" retire for media coverage, but we care little about what the public thinks. That's a different department. We only care about results and if it harms any innocent person and it ends up on the six o'clock news...It'll either be back in a cryo pod or laying on science lab table! The same goes for you if you fail to tell us the truth or don't advise us of its situation."

"Understood, sir." David spoke low and sounded almost defeated.

"Good. Now I think you should get some rest "David" Your wife is waiting on you."

The line went dead.

Fucking ONI bastards...

Gunny rubbed his chin and felt the stubble where he hadn't shaved for the day and sighed deeply. He knew this situation was bad and didn't know what to do. He hated keeping tabs on the Chief, but knew what

was at stake.

Lighting flashed and the Gunny's face was bathed in light for a brief second.

He stared outside in deep thought.

_Theres a storm coming... _

6. Chapter 6

_**"I'd thought you'd never ask."** _

* * *

><p>"So where do you guys want to go for lunch?"<p>

Sarah and some of her friends had just finished a class on tardive dyskinesia and desperately needed a reprieve from the dry lectures.

"I dunno, how about the burger place at the end of 41st street? It's always good." Christy recommended in an enthusiastic manner.

Once everyone finally agreed on where to meet up for lunch they piled into various cars and left the college campus where they attended.

It was a fairly large and new campus that sat right outside New Hadburn, one of Virginia's larger cities. The campus was well-known for their Criminal Justice teachers and offered many degrees in the forensic science field. Sitting so close to a military base made it a prime school for young men that would soon be released from active duty and wanted a future in criminal justice. This made it a very bustling community and combined with the nearby city the campus was always full of students.

One by one the cars made their way to a small deli near the campus. Eventually once everyone arrived they headed inside.

It was a smaller restaurant that sat in a corner bistro shop overlooking a rather busy intersection. It kept a retro theme that was a diminishing sight among the inhabitants of the large city. The restaurant however was usually crowded, despite its aging theme. It sat underneath a large office building that belonged to a successful bank, and many of the worker there would eat at the deli due to its nearby location.

"That storm last night was ridiculous. The city still hasn't removed all the tree limbs out of the roads."

Jess commented to Sarah while waiting to be seated.

Sarah had always been close to Jessica and knew her from high school. She was probably Sarah's closest and must trusted friend.

"Yea my apartment never lost power, but it did go off once or twice for a second."

Sarah responded trying to keep the idle conversation going.

After being seated and ordering their meals they began gossiping about various events, rumors, and other interesting topics to young college women.

Sarah had little input to the conversation, but enjoyed hearing about everyone's theories to why she likes him and why he did that and all the random interesting ideas.

There was a lull in the conversation and Jess looked over at Sarah who was staring out a window in the restaurant. She had noticed that Sarah hadn't said much throughout the day and was concerned.

"Why have you been so quiet today Sarah? Everything ok?"

Sarah looked back towards her friend who had just made her the center of attention and let out a slight sigh.

"Oh. I'm fine, just tired from all these lectures and classes." Sarah tried to sound enthusiastic and cheery to get everyone on a different topic.

"Come on Sarah! Usually we can't shut you up. Whats really going on." Christy teased who had been seating across from Sarah.

Sarah was slightly irritated at the remark, but knew she didn't mean to be rude. She mentally resigned herself and decided that telling the girls about her earlier "adventure" wouldn't hurt.

"Well, the other day my car broke down right and I don't know anything about cars. That's the mans job right?" She smiled trying to make a joke

The small group smiled and continued listening to Sarah's story.

"I was on I-23 in that area in the national forest. So, there were no other cars, gas stations or anything around there and of course with my luck, no signal." She smirked and rolled her eyes.

"I realized how screwed I was and that I was probably stuck and I was on the verge of tears. When this random guy comes running down the road, in the SMALLEST pair of shorts imaginable. Well, they were pretty big actually, but fit him like a damn speedo." She made hand signals to express just how small the shorts were on him and continued.

"Actually everything he wore was big. The guy was huge, he probably could be classified as a giant. Tone too, by the way." She grinned devilishly.

Her friends smiled as well, getting the idea of what he looked like from Sarah.

Before she could finish their food arrived and after sorting out whose food was whose they began eating. Sarah however, was still talking fast and wanted to now what her friends would think of the story.

"Anyway after I made an ass of myself trying to introduce myself. He

walks over and starts working on my car, without saying a word. I was a little nervous so I put my taser in my pocket. Not that it would have done a lot against this guy I think."

After finishing her story and leaving out the embarrassing part with him finding a tampon in her car she let out a deep sigh and looked at her friends to see what they would say. Most of her friends had finished eating and were either texting on their phones or furrowing their brows in thought about her story.

Jess was the first to speak after the story.

"So, have you called him back yet?"

"No...I mean I will, it's just." Sarah inhaled deeply.

"There's something about him, I'm not sure what, but trust me. He's not like everyone else."

Tiffany snorted and let out a brief laugh.

"Well let's hope he's not like your other guy 'friends' we all know you pick the best." Her voice was dripping with sarcasm.

Sarah looked at Tiffany very seriously and without thinking responded.

"If you had seen this man you would understand! He's something different and-" Sarah stopped talking when she realized everyone was looking at her with a strange expression.

She wanted to apologize for shouting, but Tiffany didn't need to say that last remark.

Sarah instead stood up and went to the front to pay for her meal and then walked outside to her car.

"Sarah hold on!" Jess yelled after her.

Sarah turned around and was relieved to see it was just Jess and no one else.

"UNG! She makes me so mad sometime!" Sarah said in an obviously distressed tone.

Jess jogged over to her friend and stood beside her with a concerned expression.

"She didn't mean to an ass Sarah. She was just teasing you." Jess explained.

"I know, I know." Sarah replied.

Jess cocked an eyebrow and put her hands on her hips in an angry mother fashion.

"Then what is wrong? You've acted strange all day."

Sarah sighed again and looked down at the wet ground. The puddles from the recent storm still hadn't evaporated and the parking lot was

covered in muddy water.

"I dunno, I guess im trying to think of an excuse to call him." She sounded defeated and reluctantly gave up the confession.

"That's it? That's why you've acted wierd? A guy you meet for twenty minutes is causing you this much headache, wow girl...you got problems." Jess said in a disappointed way.

_Trust me...I know. _She thought.

* * *

><p>7, 8, 9, 10

730

1, 2, 3

The morning was wet and dreary from the passing storm, but the man doing situps in his backyard didn't seem to care.

It didn't matter how bad of an emotional wreck the Chief was in, he would always ensure body first.

He had been sprinting around the large deforested area surrounding his home and was now doing sit ups in the cool morning. The sun struggled to dry up the puddles of water, but the clouds put up a fight. Which coated the entire area in a damp hazy mist.

He continued his workout until he heard a ringing sound coming from inside his home. He dusted the dirt of himself and headed instead to find the noise.

It didn't take him long to find his cell phone that his handler had given him for when he needed something.

"Hello." Chief growled, unmoved by his early workout. Which didn't seem to affect his breathing rate or tone of voice.

A familiar feminine voice came back over the line and replied.

"John?"

Chief was confused about who would call him by his first name. He could only think of one at the moment.

"Cortana?" He said in a slightly eager voice. It was hard to determine any change to his voice, but it was there, however slight it may have been.

"No, this is Sarah. You fixed my car remember. I was wondering if you'd like to have dinner this evening. Least I can do for you fixing my car."

Chief was disappointed that it wasn't Cortana, but then he remembered how sweet this young girl seemed and was pleasantly surprised to hear her voice.

He thought about her invitation for a brief moment and considered saying no. Why would she want to have dinner with him. A man with no formal dinning wear and lacked any etiquette at the table. He would just end up making a fool of himself.

But before he could respond Sarah came back over the line.

"I think some place casual would be best. Do you like Chinese organic food?"

"Yes."

Why did you say yes...You don't even know what "Chinese organic food" is?!

He mentally kicked himself for answering so hastily, but couldn't help himself. He felt somewhat nervous talking to this girl.

You are ****not**** nervous around a 110lb woman. This will be an interesting chance to see what normal civilians do. Just don't panic like last time in public.

"Great! How about tonight at seven, at The Green Dragon? It's on the corner of Pillar St and Autumn St." Sarah sounded very enthusiastic and it made Chief feel uneasy.

"I'll be there." Was all he responded with.

After an awkward goodbye with Sarah, Chief sat the phone down and quickly thought of his next course of action.

I need to find something proper to wear. As well as decide why i'm going to this meeting. I also have no idea where this chow hall is?

He did the only thing he could think of, called the only person he trusted and knew how to reach. He had promised to help him with anything he needed after all.

"This is Tom?" A weary voice came through that sounded like he had just woken up.

"Sir, I need your help."

* * *

><p>Let me know what you think. I like writing, but i want to write something ppl like. Too much drama? lemme know. Too little description on whats happening? Lemme know. Not enough fighting? Lemme know. No more exotic pole dancing...well you get the idea. Let me know whats good reading and if its fine the way it it...lemme know.<p>

7. Chapter 7

"I'm curious more than anything. It's behavior is... odd."

* * *

><p>After an awkward conversation with his CO Captain Lasky, Chief prepared as best he could for his excursion.<p>

He put on his most casual clothing, a pair of black cargo pants (It was all he had besides fatigues, or khaki cargo pants.) a black t-shirt and lace up black boots.

Admittedly, his CO told him he had very little in terms of fashion, but Chief just shrugged and wore what he had.

After using military grade intelligence services in a manner unbecoming an officer, Lasky located the restaurant for the Chief and sent it to his cell phone. The Captain then said his goodbye and wished the Chief luck on this expedition into the civilian world.

Lasky didn't tell the Chief, but he found it incredibly funny that he had called for fashion advice. He wanted to tell the rest of the crew, but decided that wouldn't be right, so he let himself have a quick laugh at the Chief's current minor problems before going back to sleep.

Chief was relieved to have his CO's advice on this predicament. He wasn't necessarily nervous, but didn't want to stand out anymore than he already would.

Chief currently waited outside the restaurant after arriving fifteen minutes early. He had always arrived fifteen minutes early to any meeting, it was standard UNSC enlisted protocol to ensure everyone was present on time.

He felt rather uncomfortable standing outside and tried to blend in as best he could.

The restaurant had cheap Chinese architecture plastered everywhere and it sat in a perfect spot for such an odd restaurant. It was located right outside New Hadburn in a commercial district. However, it was surrounded by an artificial palm tree and bamboo forest which combined with its location on top of a small hill made it seem secluded. Even though it was only a few miles away from a highly populated city.

Chief stood beside a large artificial palm tree next to the sidewalk. He was far enough away from the entrance to not be in anyone's way, but could still watch the entire area.

The restaurant wasn't too busy for the evening, given the fact that it was still a week day and most residents of the city preferred to eat at places nearby. Rather than an odd Chinese place outside of the city.

Chief wasn't sure if all restaurants were like this one. Given this was his first time eating at one. He didn't see the purpose in having a stranger cook your food in an unknown environment where so many people were around you. But, he resigned himself to act as a civilian for the evening in order to develop a greater understanding for the world in which he protected.

Chief was eyed suspiciously by almost everyone that had gone inside and he hoped Sarah would arrive soon. Much to his pleasure she

arrived early as well. Exactly six minutes and thirty-four seconds early, give or take a few seconds.

He spotted her as soon as she came through the chinese dragon sculpted entrance which lead into the palm tree courtyard where he currently waited.

She was wearing, much to Chiefs relief, casual wear. A simple black short-sleeved low-cut shirt with a faded blue jacket and jeans. He still admired her and used the few seconds before she saw him to watch her carefully. He couldn't get over how tight her jeans seemed to fit and thought it must be uncomfortable for her. However, he still enjoyed seeing her figure in them. He had little knowledge on female attractiveness, but comparatively speaking she seemed more..."gifted" than many. She had her hair down and its dark red tint shown in the dim light from the restaurant, while its brown roots complimented her face perfectly. Overall he enjoyed watching her over the other females in the vicinity. Chief assumed that meant she was attractive.

He began walking over to her and the few couples that were in between him and her quickly evaded him.

I should be a few minutes early, so I doubt he's here. I can grab a table and th

She saw the massive creature waking towards her and stopped thinking for a moment. He radiated an aura of confidence and walked with such grace that she forgot what she was doing for a brief second.

"Maim." Was the only greeting he gave her. His deep voice sent chills down her body and she was reminded why she wanted to meet him again.

"Hey John!" She smiled and stepped forward to give him a friendly hug.

Chief was...unsure how to react when the small woman stepped forward and wrapped her arms around his lower torso. He assumed she was trying to be friendly as he remembered seeing some Marines hug each other after not seeing each other for long periods of time.

Trying to return the gesture he wrapped one of his massive arms around her shoulders and squeezed very gently.

Sarah hadn't initially planned on hugging him, but she didn't really know how to greet him yet. The action took them both by surprise and she regretted it immediately. primarily because she ended up hugging a much lower part of him than she wanted to, but he was so damn big that she couldn't do anything about it.

After the awkward hello and even more awkward hug, she lead her massive companion inside. Chief assumed she ate here often because she showed him where to go and even introduced him to the waiter at the front.

His name was Frank...John didn't like Frank.

As soon as Frank saw Sarah he stopped talking to a young waitress who appeared relieved by this chance to escape Franks constant

chatter.

"Sarah Heeeeeeeeyyyy!" Franks voice irritated the Chief and he disliked him. In the same way he disliked an insect that had somehow gotten into his helmet on a hot day.

Sarah's face tightened and she forced a smile. Chief made a mental note about how she looked when she faked a smile for future reference.

"Frank! It's been awhile. How are you?" Sarah's voice even sounded different from before and he could tell he wasn't the only one to dislike this...boy.

Chief didn't want to refer to the young boy as a man. He needed a haircut and a shave, bad. He had a feminine voice and looked almost delicate to the Chief.

"Frank, this is John. He's a friend of mine."

Frank extended his hand and Chief like always shook it carefully...sort of.

"Nice to meet you John!" Frank sounded over enthusiastic and cheery. He also winced slightly at the pressure on his delicate framed hand.

What the hell are so damn happy about!

Chief nodded and suppressed his inner thoughts, but he didn't smile.

After a short gossip between Sarah and Frank which consisted of Sarah nodding and repeating the words "That's great." They were led to a corner booth that Sarah had requested.

After taking a seat across from Sarah, Chief noticed the insect was still standing by their table.

"So what can I get you guys to drink tonight?"

Sarah opened up her menu and without any hesitation responded.

"Diet Pepsi."

Frank looked over at Chief.

Chief returned the look with a glare.

"...Water."

Frank nodded nervously and hurried away towards the back.

Chief liked the atmosphere of the small restaurant. It was dim-lit and played some kind of rapid beating instrument over the PA system. The music was nice and he let himself enjoy the moment.

Sarah looked up from her menu and smiled at the Chief.

"So John, tell me about yourself?"

...No.

He knew he couldn't say that and in reality he really didn't want to. He just preferred keeping to himself when he could, but he knew this moment would come up sometime during the evening. Just didn't expect it right when they sat down.

"Not much to tell. Most...All of my stories involve the UNSC and I'd rather not discuss that." Chief really did try to sound cheery, but he knew his voice was growling. It always did.

"You gotta give me more than that John. Here I'll start. I was born here in New Hadburn, I left when I was 19 to travel around a bit. After a few years of that I came back and started trying to get into the Criminal Justice career field. I love forensic sciences and psychology studies involving criminals." She smiled brightly and Chief noticed her teeth were perfectly white. He loved her smile, it made him want to smile as well, but he didn't.

"See easy! Now your turn. Where were you born?"

Sarah could tell John was uneasy about the evening and was probably not accustomed to social outings. She had an intense curiosity about this man and wanted to delve deeper into his life. At first she was cautious towards him, but after a brief time she felt she had read him accurately.

Korem Profiling system says he's in complete control, very confident obviously. Doesn't like to talk and respects command figures. Probably a Sergeant and accountant type.

She thought she had read him accurately and her skills were very acute, but she was still in school and even if she had been an experienced psycho analyst the Chief was not someone you could describe with any profiling system. She would soon learn how wrong she was.

Chief sighed and looked over at a nearby couple sitting together. He noticed the way they both talked and smiled. He wanted to attempt this action and be like everyone else...he wanted to be...human.

"Well." Chief inhaled deeply readying himself for an evening of talk.

"I wasn't born on Reach, but it's the first place I remember being. So I call it my birthplace."

Sarah had an intense look of thought on her face and nodded slightly after the Chief finished each sentence.

"I was conscripted at a very young age and I've been fighting ever since." Chief finished and waited for her response. Hoping he had given her enough to satiate her curiosity.

"So what about your parents didn't they tell you where you were actually born."

"I don't remember them." The words stung.

"Oh I'm sorry. I didn't mean to offend." Sarah said in an apologetic tone.

"Its fine. I was over it a long time ago."

Sarah thought about what he just said and how he acted.

This guys probably seen it all. He's rigged and blocks out everything like it's trying to hurt him.

Sarah couldn't help but feel a little ashamed for trying to read him earlier. He obviously had been through a lot and she could tell he was hurting...even if he couldn't.

"Well I won't continue barraging you with questions. I was just trying to get to know you." Sarah didn't realize how aggressive that sounded until after she had said it.

"Why?" Chief simply replied.

The question took her off guard and she didn't know what to say.

"Well, uh."

Frank came by with the drinks and after setting them down asked if they were ready to order. Sarah quickly told him they needed a bit and waved him off.

"That's just what you do when you meet someone new. Get to know them and find out who they are. See if you have anything in common."

We have little if anything in common

Chief thought to himself.

"I take it you don't socialize much John." Sarah grinned and tried to tease him.

"No."

"Well when was the last time you went out on a date?"

"Never."

"What about your last girlfriend?"

"Never had one."

...This is unbelievable.

Sarah was stunned for a moment. She had foolishly called up a complete stranger who could have been a criminal for all she knew and asked him out for dinner. Primarily because she felt an intense attraction to him, both physically and mentally.

And now he tells her he has never been with anyone. She knew she wasn't the first woman to lay eyes on him. She could see the women

they walked by on the way to the booth. They eyed him the same way she did.

"What do you mean, you never had one?" She inquired curiously.

Chief shifted uncomfortably in the leather booth. He was slightly embarrassed and knew most people his age had already been in one if not several relationships. However, he was already keeping the Spartan details away from her and didn't want to further his deceit.

He leaned back in the plush leather and let a brief sigh escape him before continuing.

"I just, never had one. I've been fighting the Covenant as long as I can remember. I only recently got deployed on Earth to train UNSC forces and this is my first time away from the UNSC in...a long time."

That may be the most I've ever heard him speak at one time.

Sarah was astounded and had to remember to close her mouth to avoid looking dumb witted.

She had just recently meet a man and at a spur of the moment decision decided to take a leap of faith and trust her instincts on him. She still didn't know if she was right to risk it or not, but she knew John was, different. She was unsure about what kind of person John was, but she could tell he was kind at least.

His eyes were a warm blue and shone brightly in the dim-lit room. She could see the wrinkles around them and he looked tired, aware and alert, but tired.

I may have actually found a man different from the rest?

Chief was unsure about how she would take his revelation. He had revealed a lot to her and in turn he hoped she would understand and stop inquiring about his past.

Thankfully she understood his subtle hints and didn't pursue her previous line of questioning.

Instead they talked about various things such as favorite foods and interesting place they had been. Luckily for her the Chief had plenty of conversation material on this aspect.

He had been to many far-reaching places and while on some of the different planets had been forced to eat strange and exotic foods for substance in order to survive.

She exhibited a very peculiar interest in history though and enjoyed hearing about the various naval battles he had been apart of. He excluded certain parts, such as flying a Covenant bomb into a rival starship and detonating it. Fighting through infested Covenant city fleets, and other various heroic tales that he doubted she would believe.

After a period of time conversing she decided they should probably order and she asked the Chief what is favorite Chinese dish was.

"I don't know." Was all she got in return.

"Well, what Chinese food have you had John?"

"I've never had Chinese food."

"John, you're not making this very easy." She giggled, slightly amused at his ignorance of social behavior.

He had sat straight up all night and had only shifted once or twice. She didn't know if he was nervous or if he always acted like this. Whatever the answer was she going to find out.

"I'm sorry. This is my first time going to a restaurant." He confessed.

"You're kidding!" She said astonished.

"Well, it's fine. I'll just have to teach you a few things." She smiled and winked at him in a flirtation manner.

He didn't get it.

Chief found her wink incredibly cute and felt a heat build up in his face, but he didn't know why.

Why is she signaling me?

Sarah was disappointed when he gave her no reaction to the subtle wink. She mentally sighed and just attributed it to his lack of social knowledge.

"I'd appreciate that." Chief finally replied.

Sarah didn't think he meant that the same way she had meant her wink, but it did give her a chuckle.

This guy is absolutely adorable. I have no idea what he did or happened to him that made him this way, but Oh-my-God. He's like a big angry-looking puppy dog.

After a quick laugh at the Chiefs expense. Sarah moved over to Johns side of the booth and scooted extremely close to him.

At first Chief didn't know why she was moving to sit beside him and it made him nervous, but once she sat down and he could feel her arm next his he felt very calm.

Sarah pulled up a menu and flipped through the pages before stopping on an all organic sushi page.

"Ok John, the purpose of the menu is to decide what you want. It's full of the options they serve here." Sarah turned and smiled at John while instructing him.

Chief kept his hands on his knees and keenly observed the menu that Sarah was showing him.

He could feel the warmth from her body touch his and he desperately

wanted to smile, but he didn't.

John could smell her perfume and it enveloped his senses. He didn't fully understand why the unusual smell made him feel so, hot. This small petite woman sitting next to him was full of anomalies and surprises. He may have been nervous before, but now he was enjoying her presence.

Sarah was continuing to instruct him about the various menu options available when she leaned forward to read the small fine print on the menu regarding an organic fish, of all things.

He couldn't help but notice her shirt falling forward and exposing a bit more...chest as she leaned forward.

Chief didn't physically move, but he felt his eyes drift more so then usual.

--...--

Sarah didn't realize what had happened, as she was completely engulfed in training her new-found friend.

The rest of the evening was quiet pleasant as far as John was concerned. She taught him about the restaurant and was very understanding with his ignorance. He was pleased that she didn't ask any more questions of him and understood his problems without much concern.

John was surprised at her behavior actually. He had expected this evening to be an awkward nightmare full of silence and cold stares, but she had broken that barrier and made it an enjoyable excursion.

Shortly after learning the details of the menu, Frank returned with a scowl on his face when he noticed how close the two were sitting together. Sarah seemed to scoot slightly closer when he approached and was even leaning towards John.

John wanted to smile at her attempt to further upset the insect, but he didn't. Of course.

Sarah ordered for John after prodding him with questions on taste preference. She wasn't satisfied at his first answer which consisted of.

"Anything."

John enjoyed her teasing and didn't mind the playful way she scowled him for not saying enough.

Sarah couldn't believe what was happening now. She was sitting next to a man who could snap her neck with two fingers and she was scowling him like a mother hen for not helping her decide what he wanted to eat. It made her feel needed, wanted and she enjoyed the chance to be able to help someone who seemed so lost.

It didn't hurt that he was handsome too, she thought.

As the night went on she kept locking eyes with him. She was always

the first to look away in a shy manner, but enjoyed the brief moments. He seemed so lost and tired, she didn't understand why, but she desperately wanted to help him.

She had often volunteered to help animal shelters and immensely enjoyed interacting with animals who were mistreated. It was a hobby of hers that she picked up while in her freshman years of college. It started as a project for extra credit, but she decided to keep going to the shelter even afterwards. However, she was never fond of helping strangers usually.

She wanted to get into the Criminal Justice field because she found most people were overly aggressive and rude. Why she suddenly wanted to interact and help this stranger who she had known for only a brief time was a mystery to her.

She pushed these thoughts away for the time being however and let her guard down. Allowing herself to enjoy the evening and the company.

* * *

><p>Just wanted to say the quote at the beginning fits this chapter perfectly for Sarah. Thoughts on were to go from here? More romance? Some ONI sneaky stuff? Maybe a look at training Marines? Let me know and i'll find a way to include it.<p>

Trying to update as fast as I can. So if you notice anything wrong please let me know. I only go back once to check for mistakes.

8. Chapter 8

"You have been called upon to serve."

* * *

><p>A light breeze made the dew soaked grass wave in a chain reaction along the wide open field. The sun was still nestled behind a thick coat of clouds far away. This made the early morning chill and created a faint fog that loomed around the field, distorting trees and shrubbery, which in turn gave the field an eerie prime evil feel.<p>

A lone man covered in leaves and dirt lay just inside of the tree line. He was incredibly still despite the debris that stuck to him and insects that crawled over him.

A short breath escaped his lips and was quickly dispersed by the cool air. He shifted one arm in front of the other and peered over a small mound the obscured his presence from the wide field, his arm cracked in reaction to the movement. Sitting still and cold for so long had caused his muscles to grow sore and his bones to stiffen up.

He hesitated for just a moment, unsure just how loud the crack had been and how far the sound echoed.

He quickly forgot about the sound when he noticed movement in the wide field. Low underbrush moved against the wind and bent unnaturally. He held his breath for a moment and stared toward the movement, trying to decipher its outline in the morning haze.

After a brief pause he saw the perpetrator of the movement, two individuals in the same clothing as him revealed themselves briefly through the trees.

Adrenaline began pumping into his veins, his heart started to beat uncontrollably.

Suffer patiently, patiently suffer.

He whispered to himself mentally while observing the trees, trying to find the pair that had just disappeared back into the forest.

He checked his weapon briefly, condition one. Round in chamber, bolt forward, weapon on safe, magazine inserted.

He drew his elbow close to his body and brought his weapon to his face, peering through his scope as his did.

His eyes shifted from right to left as he employed every spotting technique he currently knew of.

Movement caught his attention again, but this time it was a single man from the earlier pair. The man looked grim and tired; his uniform was smeared with dirt and leaves the same way his own uniform was.

He was still looking through his scope when the man came into his field of fire; he counted himself lucky at the prospect of an easy mark.

_Safety off, finger on trigger, now squeeze.
Fireâ€¦.fireâ€¦..fireâ€¦fi*CRACK!_

The weapon shoved into his shoulder with a vicious kick and his body absorbed it perfectly.

_Follow through. Male 1 eliminated any signs of aid? _

The lone soldier took several deep breaths to calm his heart rate, which was extremely high due to the excitement of the moment. He scanned the area with a keen eye, anticipating others to be drawn to the sound of gunfire. However, after a few excruciating moments of dead silence, save for the sound of his heartbeat, no one else appeared.

_shoot and scoot. _

He carefully, but quickly crawled backwards the way he had come. Making sure to avoid any dry leaves that might crumple and make too much noise, he kept his eyes trained on the field. He was sure the other male would come to the aid of his friend and allow him a chance to remove another, but his hopes were in vain as his sight of the field lessened and no one appeared.

He crawled backwards for some time before finally stopping and pushing himself up. He checked his weapon briefly and turned around to escape into the forest, when suddenly. *CRACK*

A pain in his chest struck him, he instantly felt dizzy and faint.

His legs gave way and he collapsed onto the ground with a heavy thud.

"I guess twelve against one is just too much, eh?"

He knew that bemused voice and sarcastic tone.

"Maybe so, but you still lost nine men, fuck stick." The words struggled to escape his lips as his lungs gasped for air.

A massive figure suddenly appeared standing over the fallen soldier, peering down at him in a disapproving manner.

"Instructor!" The young man that had been sarcastically tormenting the fallen soldier snapped of a hasty greeting and went to parade rest.

The man on the ground quickly struggled to get to his feet, but before he could a solid and swift boot stamped on his back forcing him to the earth.

"Dead men, don't stand." Was all the massive figure said as he pressed his foot on the soldier back.

The soldier grunted as the fresh whelp caused by the searing hot dummy round in his chest was shoved into the earth.

"Roger that, Instructor!" He barely managed to eek out the words through the pain in his chest.

The boot gave one final shove into the soldiers back before letting off and coming to a rest underneath none other then the Chief.

* * *

><p>"Chief, three students have requested to speak with you. They say it's in regards to the training cycle."<p>

"Denied."

Gunny Reed grinned at the cold statement and dropped the papers he had been carrying into a nearby waste basket.

"Check one, Chief!" The Gunny replied in a sarcastic and Errah manner.

Chief zipped up a small bag that contained his training clothes and threw it over his shoulder. He quickly scanned his civilian attire he had just changed into for any threads hanging off or unprofessional marks.

Gunny dropped into a plush leather sectional that sat in the corner of the small office and let out a loud sigh of exhaustion. He put his hands behind his head and observed the Chief gather his things together.

"I think the men responded better today, your first day was a bit unconventional and they all seemed to fear you more then learn from you. Not that anyone can blame them, what with half the class being sent to medical after your first training session and all." The

Gunny exaggerated slightly and snorted in brief laughter at his own remark.

"But overall, I think whoever doesn't get broken will be sure enough Spartan material!"

"These Marines are brawlers, not Spartans." Chief growled as he started to head out the door of the Gunnies office.

Gunny furrowed his brow and thought for a quick moment. He took personal insult to that sudden remark and was unsure how to feel about it.

"Well we're only humanâ€¦" Gunny retorted in a slightly upset tone.

Chief ignored the verbal jab and guessed the Gunny had been insulted by his remark. It made no difference; these past few days training Marines had opened the Chiefs eyes to just how weak the human race was. He felt more like an outside critique than a member of the species that surrounded him.

He shrugged off this heavy feeling with a mental sigh and continued his way out of the Battalion Headquarters.

The hallways were built with CQB in mind and thus were incredibly narrow which made passing another person difficult for the Chief. As he made his way to the exit one after another clerk and desk jokey quickly evaded his scowling face and quick movement.

The Chief disliked spending so much time training Marines to fight when he couldn't use his full potential and stretch his legs down range, hypothetically speaking.

He missed his brothers, the other freaks and inhuman constructs that were created out of fear during a time of peril. They were his true family and if he was going to fight and train, he wanted to do so with men who had given there lives and bodies over to the cause of war.

As he finally reached the exit he brushed these thoughts aside and stepped through the doors leading to the parking lot. After quickly scanning the area for possible threats and making mental notes of egress routes, which took only a few seconds. He removed his cell phone from his pocket and checked his messages for anything he had missed while in the field training.

3 MISSED TEXT MESSAGES FROM NUMBER (###-###-####)

Why texts?

Chief mentally swore and headed to his truck, as he did he fumbled with the phone trying to get the text messages to display properly.

He passed a young Second Lieutenant that looked like he was about to demand that the Chief stop walking and texting, which the military deemed "unprofessional". Thankfully though, the LT reached the mental conclusion that regardless of his rank, this man was too big to mess with.

Chief ignored those around him and eventually reached his vehicle. As he did, he finally got the texts to display and began reading the small print.

"Hey John, how's your day going :) "

"You must be busyâ€|"

_"Just wanted to see if you remembered to text me back ;) still waiting." _

Chiefs' mouth curled up on one end as if trying to grin, he quickly stopped it.

He thought about attempting to text her back, but it would take entirely too long. His large fingers made it impossible to work the touch screen properly. So, he concluded that he would call her.

As the phone began dialing Chief felt a strange eager sensation in his chest build up. He had already forgotten about the poor training cycle and negative thoughts, just by knowing she was thinking about him.

Before she answered Chief took a deep breath and realized he had no idea what to say.

Is something wrong? No, nothings wrong. She would have stated so in her messageâ€|.How are you?...That'll work.

Chief pulled out of the parking lot and began heading home when she finally answered.

A soft feminine voice sparked across the line.

"Hello?"

"How are you?"

"Umm, good? John?" The voice asked in a confused, but amused state.

"Yes."

"Hey John! I was wondering when you were going to text me back, I was getting worried."

"I can't text." Chief growled.

"Why not?" She replied.

"The keyboard is too smallâ€|I don't think they made it for Spar*" Chief clenched his teeth and hesitated, hoping she didn't catch the last part.

Sarah didn't hear everything he said, but laughed anyway.

"Yea, most people aren't 8 ft and 400 lbs." She teased.

"Clearly."

"So, what are you doing tonight?" Sarah responded after a few seconds of silence over the line.

"Eating and sleeping." Chief said without a hint of sarcasm.

There was a short pause as Sarah tried to discern whether or not he was being serious or joking.

She concluded since he never joked that he was being totally serious and had no "real" plans.

"Well then we should do something! I'm about to start cooking Italian pasta, you should come over real fast and tell me how it is."

Chief read her vocal patterns over the phone mentally and could see that she was not confident and expected a bad outcome from her question. However, Chief wasn't sure whether or not a bad outcome was him agreeing or not with her offer.

After no more than a second's pause Chief replied.

"I'll begin traveling that direction after I drop of some items at my house. It'll take approximately twenty four minutes for me to reach my house and be ready."

An ecstatic voice came back over the line.

"Great! You'll love it, I promise. I'll text you the directions."

Chief concluded that he had made the right decision and pleased her. He thought briefly about why he was so concerned about pleasing this young girl he barely knew, but decided this was a normal human behavior and ignored the thought.

"Understood." Was the only reply she received.

Chief had difficulty making idle conversation over a phone line. At a young age it was drilled into him that taking up space over a line was not efficient. You spoke fast and clear over a line so others could speak as well.

Sarah, however did not understand this and was slightly confused at his aggressive and simple response.

"Okayâ€¦I'll see you then." She said slowly as if trying to draw out the conversation.

After a few seconds of silence she said bye and hung up.

_Something is reallyâ€¦odd about him. _

Sarah quickly ignored the thought and began hurrying about her small apartment kitchen, preparing the dinner she had spent all day planning in her elaborate scheme to get John to come over.

She felt a bit like a school girl thinking about John all day, but her classes at school were dull and he stuck in her imagination like

a good dream.

Waters boiling, pastas right here, got the drinks and the table readyâ€|Oh-No! The meat, it's not thawed out, damn! Microwaveâ€|that should work!

As Sarah fretted over dinner Chief quietly drove home. He checked his phone and saw that she had indeed texted him the directions to her apartment.

_Omaha St, Elpis Apartments, B-5 _

Chief shut his phone and focused on driving. When his eyes widened slightly and he mentally kicked himself, he suddenly thought.

I don't have a GPS HUD anymoreâ€|Where's Omaha St?

9. Chapter 9

"I leave home for a few days, and look what happens."

* * *

><p>The engine switched off and Chief removed the keys from the ignition, he quickly scanned the outlying building in front of him for possible threats. After he was assured the windows didn't contain any snipers or other hazards he stepped out of his vehicle.<p>

The evening was growing late and the darkness brought a cold wind with it. Chief ignored the low temperature and headed towards the apartment complex. It was a large sprawling array of structures that hugged the College campus grounds, which made it a prime area for students.

Chief was walking along a sidewalk passing building C looking ahead for building B when he heard someone laughing nearby. Shortly afterwards a group of young men rounded a corner on the building and began walking along the same sidewalk as him.

_Five adult males, similar clothing and attitude, unaware of me at this range. _

Chief decided to simply ignore the loud bunch and carry on about his business. As he drew near he overheard an individual mention his presence and the others looked up and began staring.

Chief knew those looks, they were the same faces and glaring eyes that ODS and Marines would give him after he would come back from a missionâ€|and no one else did.

As they drew near Chief could tell they were deciding if they should move off the sidewalk and let him pass or stand there ground.

In the end male testosterone won the internal argument and they remained in the middle of the sidewalk, as did the Chief.

As they approached Chief sized each one up and determined no one carried any weapons which made them little if any of a threat.

Chief halted his movement directly in front of the group and glared down at them with menacing eyes.

Like something from an old western shoot out the two sides paused for a moment. The man standing at the front of the group swallowed loudly and shifted uncomfortably.

After a brief pause the man looked down at his feet and stepped off the side walk and began walking around the Chief, the others followed his example.

As they past the Chief he overheard one say.

"Pardon us" in a frail voice.

Chief shrugged and continued walking, ignoring the group as they past him.

He made it to B-5 without further incident and stepped up to the front of the door. He hesitated for just a moment and took a deep breath.

He lightly tapped the hard rigid wood door and the sound echoed through the cold air. After a few seconds the door swung open, spilling light out onto the Chiefs face. His eyes adjusted immediately and he focused his vision on the petite young girl standing in front him, with a wide smile on her face.

"You made it, come in John!" The young women said enthusiastically.

As she turned around to lead the Chief inside, he took notice of her clothing. A maroon t-shirt with the same tight jeans she usually wore, while simple and casual he still thought she looked stunning. He was pleased that she hadn't worn anything too "nice" as he only donned grey cargo pants and a dark green shirt.

Sarah closed the door behind him and locked it out of habit.

"Well now you can't get out, hehe!" She teased as she headed over to the kitchen which was connected to the living area with a bar raised around it.

"The walls are thin!"

Sarah stopped and turned around with an amused smile on her face.

"I was joking John, we have GOT to work on your sense of humor." Sarah laughed.

"But seriously, no crashing through my walls. I doubt that's covered by renters insurance."

Chief nodded and followed her into the kitchen, which was spacious enough for three people, but a bit tight for her and Chief.

Sarah began gathering up two of everything and sat them to one side of the counter. She was surprised how comfortable she already felt with John, usually she would be a nervous wreck on a second "date" at her place, but John made her feel safe and secure.

She spun around quickly to ask John what he wanted to drink and was startled to see just how close he was to her in the small kitchen.

Okay, now the anxiety is setting in!

Sarah thought quickly to herself before recovering.

"Umm, what do you want to drink? I've got Tea, soda, juice, andâ€|.beer? Do you even drink John?"

"Never, it thins the blood and dehydrates the system." Chief replied in a very "sobering" tone.

Sarah rolled her eyes at the Chief and let out a brief laugh.

"Alright smartass." She retorted back.

After settling on water to drink, Sarah gave Chief his plate and led him back to the living room where she motioned for him to take a seat.

"I thought we could watch a movie while we ate, maybe that'll fix the silence you always leave me with." She smirked as she sat her plate down and went to one side of the wall that was covered in a large TV.

"What kinds of movies do you like, wait! Let me guess, never seen one, right?"

Chief thought for a moment about all the documentaries and films over the history of warfare strategies he had seen, but elected that she wasn't referring to educational movies.

"Whatever you like." Chief offered her in return.

Sarah began sorting through digital files on the touch screen next to the TV, quietly humming to herself as she did.

"Maybe you'll like this; it's one of my favorites. Very cheesy and romantic, perfect "guy" stuff." She mocked.

Sarah began the movie and sat down next to Chief, as the two began eating Chief was impressed with the food. It was much better than the restaurant and anything was better than chow hall mess.

Chief cleaned his plate in record time and sat rather rigidly in the small sofa next to Sarah. She eyed him carefully while finishing her meal and couldn't discern if he was nervous or just didn't relax often enough to let his guard down.

Sarah ignored her concerns and after she finished her meal she dimmed the lights, just as the movie was getting past the list of credits and long introduction.

Chief was enjoying himself more-so than usual, even if his body didn't express it properly. The room was comforting and contained many luxuries he was unaccustomed to given his violent past. The

couch was soft, the carpet was warm, and the movie draped only a shimmer of light across the room that made the atmosphere very welcoming.

The pair sat close together, but neither side looked at the other for the longest time. Finally, Sarah forced herself to break the stillness and used an old dating technique.

"It's freezing in here, I'm getting a blanket!" Sarah said in a rehearsed tone.

As she went to the linen to grab a blanket she made sure and lowered the temperature a few degree to help give the Chief an excuse to share the "only" blanket.

Sarah grinned devilishly as she made her way back to the dark living room.

As Sarah curled up in the blanket she propped her feet up next to the Chief and gave him an innocent look.

_Come on! You know you want to share the blanket John!" _Sarah mused internally.

Chief let a slight grin spread across his face when she poked him with her foot on "accident".

_Why is she playing games during a movie, she'll miss something important?... Feels like t__he temperature is dropping, must be getting colder outside. _Chief concluded.

The evening was quite cozy, despite the Chief not falling for the blanket routine. The two made sure to keep a close eye on the other and the movie received little attention over the course of the evening.

Toward the end of the movie Chief glanced over at Sarah who had fallen asleep curled up in the blanket. This time no one was around, so he let the smile spread across his face. The moment lasted only a few seconds, but it was a moment like something from a dream. Nothing else mattered in the world, and while he knew he was far from safe in this room, a part of him unraveled and he felt secure, but not the same secure he felt while wearing his armor. No, this was a deeper more emotional secure that he hadn't felt in a long time. The way the light from the TV stained the walls reminded him of dark nights where all the stars would shine bright...if he could still be happy and feel joy, this was the moment he would do so.

As quickly as the moment sparked to life it gave way as Chief heard a noise outside that drew his guard up. It was only someone delivering food to another apartment, but it reminded Chief he needed to keep his mind off lesser concerns.

After the movie was over Sarah rolled over and stretched her legs out over the nearby table that was littered with dishes and glasses.

"Well what did you think?" Sarah asked, yawning halfway through her sentence.

"It was good." Chief murmured.

"Oh come on John! Be honest, you didn't find it romantic? I cried my eyes out the first time I saw it, well actually I cried the first seven or eight times I saw it." Sarah confessed.

Chief had enjoyed the film, but didn't see the purpose behind a movie that didn't teach you anything.

"Why did Cullen go through so much for Bella, when he didn't have too?" Chief asked in a curious voice.

Sarah raised an eyebrow and thought for a moment.

"Well, he loved her." Sarah answered in a way that made it sound as if she were asking the question.

"You've never cared for someone so deeply, that you'd do anything for them?" Sarah added in a low tone.

Sarah could see John's face tense up after she asked the question and knew she had struck a nerve.

"Many, but only one that mattered." John replied in a defeated voice.

This guy has a story behind him, but does he have one in front of him as well?

"I shouldn't ask, but what happened to them?" Sarah regretted asking even before she finished her sentence, but she desperately wanted to learn more about this mysterious man.

John steeled himself against the emotional torment that he had caged within his mind. He took a shallow breath and stood up from the couch, which began filling in the large dent where he had been sitting.

In a cold voice he replied simply,

"I lost her."

Chief moved through the living room in two large strides and stopped at the front door and glanced back at Sarah, who had begun unraveling herself from the blanket in haste.

Chief opened the door and stepped through, but as he did Sarah called his name and followed him over the threshold. He turned around and met her eyes as she stood in the doorway.

"I'm sorry, John I shouldn't have asked about something so personal." She stammered out as she hugged herself to suppress the cold.

"It's fine." Chief barked as he turned back around and began walking into the cold dark night.

He overheard his name behind him, but didn't bother to stop or turn around. He didn't want to hear her voice or see her face right now; she was too familiar to him.

Like a reminder of his past failures, her voice brought back the torment within.

**_"I'm not coming with you this time"*_

_So many died by my hands, but I couldn't save, just one. _

10. Chapter 10

**_"Chief, Please"*_

* * *

><p>The harsh weather showed little sympathy toward our hero who stood outside his home, breathing in the cold air.<p>

Every breath he took reminded him of the sacrifices it took to forge him, and save him.

* * *

><p>The days started to grow shorter for Chief as he further distanced himself from those around him. Training the Marines only taunted him with the taste of battle, he had never relished fighting or war, but after so long only fighting, he found it difficult to understand anything else. He dreamed of his past comforts often and those around him would often notice him fade away as if deep in thought or dreaming.<p>

_"Chief!" a voice screamed in agony over the sound of a raging battle. _

_"Chief, we can't stay here!" It pleaded. _

_Chief heard the screams clearly, but didn't acknowledge them. He focused on the battle and nothing else mattered at the time, except war. _

_The heavy warm armor pressed against his body, his weapon rested in his palms and he could feel the vibrations as it spit fire. This is what he was created for, he was made to hold back the horrors of the galaxy, and this was his life. Like the titan Atlas holding up the world, he held back the flood of war. _

_A nearby soldier was impaled by a razor sharp yellow spine that threw him backwards into the dirt. _

_Chief didn't lose sight of his enemy, the bright fire of his weapon painted his armored face and he felt at peace, while in war. Others around him however, were not so lucky and when the waters of war rose past their heads drowning them, he remained standing, alone, with the world on his shoulders. _

Why me, what makes me so different that all others must fall into the maw of war and leave me here, alone?

The question tormented him and he found himself asking it often.

* * *

><p>It had been a week since he walked out of Sarah's apartment and he wished he could go back and tell her he was sorry. He didn't understand the emotions he felt and had too much time on his hands to think and ponder his mistakes. Most of his days were filled with exercising and standing outside alone recalling past memories and reflecting on those he left behind in the world of war.<p>

****DING!****

The sound of the oven timer going off brought Chief back to the present world.

Chief sat down in a large sturdy chair in an almost bare dining room, the silence in the house was deafening.

He made certain to keep everything clean, but never purchased anything and as such the house appeared relatively empty, save a few pieces of furniture that were already there when he came.

The sound of his utensils against the ceramic plate echoed through the silence. He had to focus to think about the training cycle and not let his mind drift to far. It was always difficult coming back to reality when his dreams were so much better.

Chief finished his meal and was cleaning his plate in the sink when he heard a vehicles engine in the distance. Usually the vehicles that past by on the highway never came this close to his house, but this vehicle was closing in, and sounded familiar.

Chief quickly thought about how weak and pitiful the engine sounded, but then realized it was a hybrid and was suppose to sound like that.

Hybridâ€|.

He only knew one person that drove a hybrid and knew where he lived. Chiefs heart began to beat faster then normal and he rushed up to his room to put on something besides UNSC PT wear.

A young woman stepped out of her car in front of the large two story home and adjusted her hair, which was being ravaged by the strong wind.

God, I hope I'm making the right decisionâ€|.

The woman was breathing rapidly and her hands were cold, despite having been inside the warm vehicle. She blamed the anxious feeling on having drunk an energy drink earlier and decided it had little to do with her present location.

Oh, face it Sarah, you're nervous.

She stepped up to the front of the house and pressed the small button next to the door. After waiting a few minutes she pressed it again and tried to peer through the window next to the door.

She waited a few minutes longer and began to wonder if he was even home, however his truck was in the open garage and the door was

unlockedâ€|.so, she decided to poke her head inside and see if he was okay.

"John!..." She said slightly louder then her usual tone, there was no need to yell given how quiet the house was, besides the wind buffeting the walls and creating an almost eerie ambiance it was complete silence.

She slowly stepped inside and closed the door behind her; she heard a noise upstairs and stopped for a moment.

The house was spacious, but largely unoccupied and empty. She started biting her fingernail and began taking a few steps forward, towards the large wooden staircase near the foyer.

She creped up the steps and once at the top she looked around for some sign of movement.

"John?" She yelled again, while heading towards the sound of movement. She approached a door at the far end of the hallway on the second floor and opened it without hesitation.

"Oh my God!" She shouted.

Chief turned around and nodded at her in greeting, despite the fact that he was in his boxers.

"I'm SO sorry! I was driving by to see my parents and the door was unlocked. I just thought I'd, well" She stammered and stuttered as she quickly turned her back towards his almost naked figure.

Chief was so accustomed to small quarters where seeing each other nude was no big deal and had been fully nude around scientists on many occasion, so he was not flustered in the least bit.

"It's alright, Sarah." Chief replied softly as he continued getting dressed.

Hearing John say her name sent chills down her spine and she had to take a deep breath to relax herself.

She peered back over her shoulder without turning her body and watched John as he zipped on a pair of suede boots.

Does he have enough scars, my God!

Much of the Chiefs body was crisscrossed with a pattern of scars from various occasions. Many of them were from a single incident which involved a prototype suit of armor that lacked a proper insulation. During a firefight he was exposed to a gas explosion and the heat had burned a pattern from the armor into his flesh. The result was a horrific sight and combined with the other scars, inhuman size, and metallic looking frame under much of his flesh, gave him the appearance of an ancient prime evil God of war, which was a fitting look.

Sarah couldn't take her eyes off John, his raw power and size, when combined with the graceful way he moved was something she had never seen before.

"I'm sorry again about barging in like this; I just figured we should talk."

As he pulled on a shirt over his torso he looked up towards Sarah and noticed her eyeing him over her shoulder, she quickly shot her face forward and began gnawing at her fingernail again.

"I'm glad you came by, I wanted to apologize for leaving so suddenly the other night." John spoke softly compared to his usual tone and walked around to Sarah's side.

"Well, I shouldn't have asked you about personal stuff, you look like you've been through a lot." Sarah winced.

"Thatâ€¦ may have come out wrong." She added.

"It's alright." John sighed and looked over to his nearby desk which contained various medals and documents about his past, most of which he had never actually looked at our read, but still reminded him of his history.

Sarah caught his gaze at the desk and raised an eyebrow; she crossed the smooth wooden floor slowly and looked from one side to the other over the various items on the desk.

Chief followed behind her and wondered if he should make an excuse to keep her from seeing anything to "forthcoming".

"Wow, you certainly earned your pay." Sarah joked, trying to lighten the awkward mood.

"What's this one stand for?" She asked.

"It's a purple heart, wounded in action." Chief replied.

"But, there's like twelve of them!?" She exclaimed.

Chief just nodded and went to the door, figuring she would sense he wanted her to follow him.

As she turned around to follow Chief out she glanced back at his bed and noticed it was perfectly made. Then she noticed the small sleeping bag in the corner of the room.

I may be in over my head...

After leading Sarah down the stairs and away from anything to exposing he turned back around and faced her.

"What did you want to talk about?" Chief asked in a cool voice.

Sarah adjusted her stance and cleared her throat.

"I just felt that I may have come off as a bit rude and wanted to see if we could still, see each other."

Ung! That sounded horrible, I shouldn't have said it like that!"_

"You weren't being rude, Sarah. I just need some time to, adjust. I have a lot of things I need to accept before I can move on with my life." He sounded tired and broken. All his life he had been told what to do and now he had freedom, a completely alien thing in his life. The concept was almost frightening to him and he desperately wanted someone to understand, but doubted anyone would.

_Please tell me he didn't just friendzone me! _Sarah thought quickly.

"Oh, well, I" Sarah exhaled deeply and closed her eyes for a brief moment.

"So, does that mean you don't want me around anymore?" She asked in a hurt voice.

_How do I make her understand? _Chief thought to himself. There was no way he could explain everything and expect her to understand or even "believe" him for that matter. This was a complicated process of emotions and he wasn't sure what he wanted.

So, he did what he always did, he jumped.

Sarah didn't have time to react and it took her a second to realize what was happening.

John had delicately scooped her up in his arms and pressed her petite lithe body against his own, and kissed her.

So, this is what it feels like...

End
file.